

# Working & Playing Outdoors in Warm Climates

Hot summer months pose special hazards for individuals who work or play outdoors. Recommendations on how to protect yourselves against heat, sun exposure, insect and animal bites and poisonous plants. If you would like additional information on these topics please contact the Harper County Health Department at 620-842-5132, or check out information on the Centers for Disease Control website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

Sun	Heat	Mosquito Bites
<p><b>Sunlight contains ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which causes premature aging of the skin, wrinkles, cataracts, and skin cancer. Here's how to block those harmful rays:</b></p> <p>Cover up. Wear loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and long pants.</p> <p>Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Be sure to follow application directions on the bottle or tube.</p> <p>Wear a hat. A wide brim hat, not a baseball cap, works best because it protects the neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose, and scalp.</p> <p>Wear UV-absorbent sunglasses (eye protection). Sunglasses should block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB radiation.</p> <p>Limit exposure. UV rays are most intense between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.</p>	<p><b>The combination of heat and humidity can be a serious health threat during the summer months. If you work or play outside, you may be at increased risk for heat related illness. So, take precautions. Here's how:</b></p> <p>Drink small amounts of water frequently.</p> <p>Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing — cotton is good.</p> <p>Take frequent short breaks in cool shade.</p> <p>Eat smaller meals before activity.</p> <p>Avoid caffeine, alcohol and large amounts of sugar.</p> <p>Work or play in the shade when you can.</p> <p>Find out from your health care provider if your medications and heat don't mix.</p> <p>Know that equipment such as respirators or work suits can increase heat stress.</p>	<p><b>The West Nile virus and other viruses are transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. You can protect yourself from mosquito bites in these ways:</b></p> <p>Apply Picaridin or insect repellent with DEET to exposed skin. Apply the insect repellent after you have applied sunscreen to your skin.</p> <p>Spray clothing with repellents containing DEET or permethrin. (Note: Do not spray permethrin directly onto exposed skin.)</p> <p>Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks.</p> <p>Be extra vigilant at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, although they can bite at any time of day.</p> <p>Get rid of sources of standing water (used tires, buckets) to reduce or eliminate mosquito breeding areas.</p>
Tick-Borne Diseases	Poison Ivy-Related Plants	Animal Bites
<p><b>Protect yourself from tick-borne diseases with these precautions:</b></p> <p>Wear light-colored clothes to see ticks more easily.</p> <p>Wear long sleeves; tuck pant legs into socks or boots.</p> <p>Wear high boots or closed shoes that cover your feet completely.</p> <p>Wear a hat.</p> <p>Use tick repellents, but not on your face.</p> <p>Shower after work. Wash and dry your work clothes at high temperature.</p> <p>Examine your body for ticks after work.</p> <p>Remove any attached ticks promptly and carefully with fine-tipped tweezers by gripping the tick. Don't use petroleum jelly, a hot match, or nail polish to remove the tick.</p> <p>Seek medical attention if you develop a rash or fever following a tick bite.</p>	<p><b>Poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac have poisonous sap (urushiol) in their roots, stems, leaves and fruits. The urushiol may be deposited on the skin by direct contact with the plant or by contact with contaminated objects, such as clothing, shoes, tools, and animals. To protect yourself:</b></p> <p>Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, tucked into boots. Wear cloth or leather gloves.</p> <p>Apply barrier creams to exposed skin.</p> <p>Educate yourself on the identification of poison ivy, oak, and sumac plants.</p> <p>Educate yourself on the signs and symptoms of contact with poisonous ivy, oak and sumac.</p> <p>Keep rubbing alcohol accessible. It removes the oily resin up to 30 minutes after exposure.</p>	<p><b>Domestic pets cause most animal bites. Dogs are more likely to bite than cats. Cat bites, however, are more likely to cause infection because they are usually puncture wounds and can't be thoroughly cleaned. Bites from non-immunized domestic animals and wild animals carry the risk of rabies. Rabies is more common in bats, raccoons, skunks and foxes than in cats and dogs. Rabbits, squirrels and other rodents rarely carry rabies.</b></p> <p>Avoid contact with unknown domestic and wild animals.</p> <p>If you have pets make sure they are up to date on appropriate vaccines, including rabies.</p> <p>Keep your own immunizations, especially tetanus, up to date.</p> <p>If you are bitten by an animal seek medical attention from your health care provider to determine the risk for rabies and need for follow-up treatment.</p>